

China Frees 2 American Prisoners

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CPYRGHT

The American prisoners freed by China on Sunday were apparently released as a result of efforts undertaken by White House national security adviser Henry Kissinger during his trips to Peking.

State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey disclosed yesterday that Kissinger, who twice visited Peking to arrange for President Nixon's forthcoming trip to China, raised the question of the U.S. prisoners in his talks with Chinese Premier Chou En-lai.

Although the details of Kissinger's discussions were not made public, the Chinese released Richard Fecteau, 44, of Lynn, Mass., and Mary Ann Harbert, of Menlo Park, Calif., in a gesture on the eve of the President's trip.

Speaking on behalf of the President, now meeting in the Azores with French President Georges Pompidou, White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler said that Mr. Nixon "welcomes the act of the People's Republic of China" and expressed "particular pleasure" that Fecteau and Miss Harbert would spend Christmas with their families.

Both Miss Harbert and Fecteau were reported in good health on their arrival in the United States last night.

The Chinese also announced on Sunday that they had commuted the sentence of John T. Downey, 41, of New Britain, Conn., who was captured with Fecteau during the Korean War in November, 1952.

Both men were identified by American officials as civilian employees of the U.S. Army whose aircraft disappeared on a flight from South Korea to Japan. The Chinese charged, however, that they were Cen-

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